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SUBJECT: DCM AND MFA OFFICIAL DISCUSS BURMA ISSUES

REF: KUALA LUMPUR 391 -- MALAYSIA URGES ASSK'S RELEASE

Classified By: CDA Robert Rapson for reasons 1.4 b and d.

11. (C) Summary: The Malaysian Foreign Ministry official responsible for mainland Southeast Asia told the DCM May 29 that Malaysia viewed implementation of the Burmese regime's "roadmap to democracy" as a way forward, and discussed the challenges of making headway on the Rohingya refugee/migrant issue. Sadik noted the GOM's commitment to look into allegations of trafficking of refugees and the GOM's desire for more information from the U.S. Senate. The DCM questioned the utility of Burma's "roadmap," urged Malaysia to continue to press the regime to release Aung San Suu Kyi, and noted the seriousness of the trafficking allegations against Malaysian officials. End Summary.

12. (C) Deputy Chief of Mission Rapson and Poloff called on Mohamad Sadik Gany, the MFA's Under Secretary for Burma, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and Oceania on May 29, with the discussion focusing mostly on Burma. Sadik suggested that the best way forward in Burma was to allow the regime to implement the "roadmap to democracy" as it would eventually lead to a legitimate government. The DCM raised questions about the validity of such an approach, reminding that the regime had conducted its referendum on the roadmap last year in the immediate aftermath of the devastating Cyclone Nargis, hardly the time to be polling the populace on such an important and controversial initiative. Regarding Aung San Suu Kyi's (ASSK) recent arrest, Sadik opined that "Burmese security may have been aware of the swimmer," so it was unclear why she was being charged. The DCM encouraged Malaysia to continue publicly and privately to urge the regime to release ASSK. Sadik commented that while Malaysia was opposed to the Myanmar government's actions against ASSK, it was highly unlikely that ASEAN would consider expelling Burma from the organization, as some were suggesting in the international press. He suggested that continued engagement with the military leadership was the only real option available.

13. (C) On the subject of Rohingya refugee/migrant flows to Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia, Sadik said that when the MFA raises this issue, Burmese officials deny the Rohingya are Burmese nationals (as they did during previous ASEAN meetings). ASEAN is making greater effort on this issue than is reported in the press, Sadik claimed, but its collective actions are still uncoordinated and problematic. Regarding Burmese refugees/migrants in Malaysia, Sadik recognized that there are other ethnic groups, not just the Rohingya, who face the same challenges. The GOM finds it difficult to repatriate the Burmese because most do not have supporting documentation indicating their nationality or country of origin. Sadik pointed out the GOM tacitly allows many

Burmese to remain in Malaysia, rather than summarily deporting them. The DCM acknowledged the refugee burden and challenges Malaysia faces, and said the Burmese regime should be held fully accountable for these cross-border problems, among others, it is causing for its ASEAN neighbors.

14. (C) In order to better combat trafficking in persons (TIP), Sadik noted that the MFA has been working closely with the Immigration Department, which is taking the recent allegations in the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee report "very seriously." Sadik stated that the Director General of Immigration was "furious" and wanted to get to the root of the problem. According to Sadik, U.S. Senate committee staff had indicated to the past Director General that more information would be forthcoming regarding the alleged involvement of Malaysian officials, but so far the GOM has not received additional details. The DCM underscored that ample information on the allegations had already been provided in the Senate report and by various NGO's, which should be sufficient for Malaysian authorities to launch and pursue a rigorous investigation.

RAPSON